

on a bipartisan basis, and a Democratic Governor signed it.

Democrats have continued to insist that S. 1 is a response to these State laws, but we know it actually predates them. And we are starting to see that our colleagues' latest rationale for S. 1 can be flexible when needed. Prominent Democrats have railed against voter ID requirements for years, but now that voter ID is among the sticking points keeping the Democratic caucus from uniting behind S. 1, some Democrats have started indicating, well, they have had a change of heart. Now, I would commend them for coming around to commonsense positions on that issue that 80 percent of Americans already support. But one supposed compromise, among some Democrats, bears more than a passing resemblance to the partisan power grab their party has touted for years. It even introduces its own disastrous new liabilities, like a proposal to automate redistricting that is certainly constitutionally dubious.

At the end of the day, Madam President, which concocted crisis Democrats choose as justification for their top legislative priority actually doesn't make much difference. They have made abundantly clear that the real driving force behind S. 1 is a desire to rig the rules of American elections permanently—permanently—in the Democrats' favor. That is why the Senate will give this disastrous proposal no quarter.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Christopher Charles Fonzzone, of Pennsylvania, to be General Counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF MILITARY FORCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was October of 2002. I remember the day when in the Senate we decided to vote on the question as to whether or not we would authorize President Bush to use military force in Afghanistan. We considered the issue of Iraq before. Twenty-three of us had voted against giving that authority to President Bush.

When it came to Afghanistan, the argument was different. The argument was that those responsible for 9/11, for

killing 3,000 innocent Americans, were hiding out in Afghanistan, and if we didn't ferret them out of their hiding place and hold them accountable, what kind of nation would we be? I bought that argument. Virtually every Member of Congress agreed, with one exception—Congresswoman BARBARA LEE of California. But we voted to use military force in Afghanistan under extraordinary circumstances in 2002.

Now, I listened to the Republican leader come to the floor and accuse President Biden of abandoning Afghanistan, retreating from Afghanistan. And he leaves out some salient facts. The negotiation with the Taliban, which was initiated by President Trump, was a negotiation to determine who would be in power, what areas they would hold, and when the United States would leave. It was President Trump who initiated that negotiation, not President Biden. President Biden, when he took office, followed through with it. I applauded him for doing so.

I realize—and I think everyone does—that the situation in Afghanistan is perilous, but I think that we ought to acknowledge the obvious. After the longest war in the history of the United States, after losing over a thousand American lives and tens of thousands wounded, after spending trillions of dollars, we were not winning in Afghanistan. We didn't have a winning hand or a winning strategy. The Taliban was still a viable political force, and the Afghan security forces many times were overwhelmed by that Taliban force.

I wonder why the Republican leader from Kentucky doesn't do the obvious. He has the authority, under the rules of the Senate, to introduce a measure authorizing the use of military force in Afghanistan. If he believes we should stay or send more troops there, that is his right. He can offer that on the floor of the Senate, instead of lamenting what has happened there. He has the authority. If he thinks we have abandoned the Afghan people and should go back into that country, why doesn't he offer an authorization for use of military force?

I think we know the answer. There is little or no support on his side of the aisle, nor on this side of the aisle, to make the longest war in American history even longer. Yes, we should be a viable force to try to make certain the Afghan people have a fighting chance. But after almost 20 years at it, I think we have shown that our strategy was not the winning strategy.

CORONAVIRUS

Madam President, on a different subject, as our Nation continues to emerge from COVID-19 restrictions, vaccinated Americans were able to gather safely this past weekend for two happy events: Father's Day and the first Juneteenth Federal holiday. These celebrations came at the end of a week that brought welcome news to America.

After 11 years of Republicans fighting the Affordable Care Act, the Supreme

Court finally said: Enough. Millions of Americans have health insurance at a time when they desperately need it, in the midst of a pandemic, and your theories on Constitution and law are not adequate to end the Affordable Care Act. Thank goodness for that 7-2 ruling.

The administration, of course, was heartened by that and by the knowledge that we are fast approaching the point where 70 percent of the adults in America are going to be vaccinated.

Remember when President Biden took office 6 months ago? Yes, we had the vaccines, but we hadn't produced them in quantity, and we didn't have a plan for vaccinating America. Thank goodness, now the United States is leading the world in the effort to vaccinate its population. I thank President Biden for that and the resources that we provided to him.

We still have a challenge. We still have a threat. The Delta variant is much more easily spread than the COVID strain that shut down the Nation last year. It has now been identified in 41 States. For those who are holding back and not seeking a vaccination, they are in greater danger than they were a year ago if that infection comes near them. I hope my Republican colleagues will join the Democrats in urging Americans to be vaccinated as quickly as possible.

WAR ON DRUGS

On a different topic, Madam President, last week marked the 50-year anniversary of President Nixon's declaration of a War on Drugs. Today, America imprisons a greater share of its population than any nation on Earth. Drugs are cheaper and more easily available than ever, and substance abuse is destroying more American families than ever. The greatest harm has fallen on our most vulnerable citizens, particularly low-income Americans and communities of color.

During the first four decades of the Nixon War on Drugs, America's Federal prison population grew by 700 percent, and the cost of operating Federal prisons exploded by 1,100 percent. Today, nearly half the people in Federal prisons are locked up due to drug-related charges. We are learning the hard way that we can't jail our way out of a public health crisis.

In recent years, the Senate has come together on a significant bipartisan basis to correct some of the gravest mistakes on the War on Drugs. I am grateful to my friend, the ranking Republican member on the Judiciary Committee, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, for his leadership in this effort. We forged a bipartisan partnership that ended up sending the First Step Act, a reform effort, to President Bush to sign into law—pardon me—sent to President Trump to sign into law.

Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on another crucial piece of reform: Eliminating the disparate treatment of